

Crucial Conversations you have to have with your spouse

***Conversations of grace build oneness.**

INTRO

Serena.Sinclair.™ .Brent.Sinclair?qualifications;Married.9③years?love.each.other.and.even.like.each.other*.Also.been.active.in.adult?men?women?youth.™.kids.ministries.spanning.9.decades;..Led.or.actively.involved.in.a.Life.Group.for.almost.0.decades;.....

Sermon series theme

***“Let your conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Colossians 4:6**

- Ask your neighbor: If you had to choose a “spice,” how would you describe the majority of conversations?
- Cinnamon and sugar,
- spicy cayenne-ouch,
- Mrs. Dash - a savory salt substitute (blah, cause no salt)
- Himalayan sea salt

Sermon series on Crucial Conversations...begs the question...

***What is a crucial conversation?** Quote from Brandon Conner - Mosaic Church

- a. Difference of opinion
- b. Emotions are strong
- c. Stakes are high

Covers a lot of territory. Difference of opinion on what is crucial. Serena’s list may be different than Brent’s list. We can’t cover everything on everyone’s list, but we want start with a home base...

Prayer

***First CRUCIAL CONVERSATION: Rules of Engagement**

Debra is underappreciated <https://youtu.be/vEeDoLYJDVg> stop at 3:05

There are multiple issues occurring in Debra and Raymond's crucial conversation. With some intentionality and grace – we can wisely avoid what happened in their crucial conversation.

Let's start by laying out Guidelines for a Crucial Conversation.

This is for everyone, not just married couples.

Guidelines help us maneuver through crucial conversations without “pushing emotional hot buttons.”

Goal is Colossians 4:6, Let your conversation be full of grace with a pinch of salt.

Crucial conversations early on for Brent and I involved differences of opinion.

- Religion – most painful for me – because my faith was tethered to my parents' faith. I didn't have the theology answers to my faith, I had adopted it as my own. Brent – ask me questions that no one else had asked – unsettling – I had to decide not whose side I was going to be on, but what did I believe.
- Those were high stake conversations – that for me often ended in tears
- Whose house we're going to for the holidays – high stake – difference of opinion – also emotional
- Who is on sick patrol with the kids for the night
- How to raise teenagers
- How to do correctly calculate taxes and tax breaks for a small business
- What food is healthy a cheeseburger or a asparagus and salad

The best advice for a crucial high-stake conversation: have regular conversation

Regularly! fill up the emotional tank throughout the week

- a. Initiate communication throughout the week; be a catalyst; start each day with ...a kiss, hug, or greeting “Have I told you I love you today?”

***Rules of Engagement:**

1. **Agree upon a good time for both of you.**
 - a. Our friend Raymond chose the worst time to let Debra know about his financial generosity – right before bedtime. If you want your spouse to sleep in another room, introducing a difficult conversation when they're exhausted, and done for the day works!

2. **Honestly examine your thoughts and feelings why reacting**
 - a. Why didn't Raymond have a conversation with Debra before he loaned his friend \$
 - b. Difficult, we have blind spots – be willing become vulnerable
God's Spirit will guide you, reveal inner thoughts and WHY you feel the way you do.
 - c. Ps 139:23 search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

3. **Voice your needs and feelings without accusing**
 - a. Accusing: When you yelled at me you were mean and controlling
 - b. Accusing someone of being "" immediately puts them in defensive mode
 - i. You're on the same side; trying to find a solution;
understand the problem
 - c. Reframe-when you raised the volume of your voice, I felt like you were reprimanding me like a child and being dismissive, triggered a memory of my parent yelling at me because I couldn't do something the right way.

Example:

4. **Listen carefully to understand their point of view**

- a. Without interrupting

5. **Repeat what you think the other person said**

- a. Refrain from becoming defensive
- b. Stay on topic – no rabbit trails or lists of what is wrong

6. **Seek to resolve not win – who is right**

- a. The discussion is not about who is right and who is wrong

- b. Arrive at a solution that both people can live with, and move forward
- c. Put away being offended – builds a wall

For Brent and I we have completely different personalities.

Model conversation: what will it be Brent? So Brent is not an avid conversationalist, a true introvert; Serena on the other hand thrives on conversing with others.

In our crucial conversations we won't understand what the other person is feeling or going through until we listen well, and repeat what the other person said, and examine our own emotions.

Be intentional with these guidelines for CC

The goal is conversations full of grace seasoned with salt.

***Second CRUCIAL CONVERSATION - What do we want our relationship to be? (we come with preconceived notions)**

What is marriage? Where did it come from? Will be helpful to look at how God designed marriage. Genesis 2:18-24

18.The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."...

20.But for Adam ^fno suitable helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs ^a and then closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib ^b he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,'for she was taken out of man."²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become **one flesh**. NIV

Everyone say "one flesh"

Jesus references this account in Matthew 19:4-6

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' ? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." NIV

Everyone say "joined" (not stuck)

Are we ONE?

"They are no longer two, but one flesh." What?

We have been wondering how in the world this "ONENESS" works ever since God designed the relationship. In a math equation is it....

$1 + 1 = 2$ or $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$ OR $1 + 1 = \text{ONE}$ God's new math

God's intent and design for equality, companionship and ONENESS gets all mangled in by the actions of man and woman in Genesis chapter 3. (blame game)

Our dilemma is we are trying to be "ONE" in a fallen world as a fallen, broken person. Sin has separated us from God and our only hope is being made new in Christ, not just forgiven, not just restored but made new in Christ.

We are to walk as individuals who ARE restored sons and daughters, we are complete in Christ as a whole person...THEN by grace we can have crucial conversations with our spouse and anyone.

Marriage – Two are joined together... and function together

The word marriage literally means "joined together" Illustration of the 2 pieces of construction paper glued together. Brent is still fully Brent and Serena is still fully Serena – but are now joined/bonded together. Now try to separate them. Cannot be done without damage (pain, loss) to both.

The purpose of this is not to evaluate separation or divorce, that a longer more complicated discussion; the purpose is to illustrate the bonding, the joining of marriage and how deep it runs.

- Two whole and separate people joined together to a new God. Designed and God-purposed life;

Marriage – Covenant relationship made by husband and wife before God.

Malachi 2:14

“It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant”. NIV

Marriage – A demonstration of love and SACRIFICE

Ephesians 5:25-32

Husbands, **rxg** your wives, **lwx'cu** Christ **rxgf** the church and **i cxg'j lo ught'wr** for her **26** to make her holy, cleansing **27** her by the washing with water through the word, **27** and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. **28** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives **cu'vj gkt'** **qy p'dqf lgu**. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Story- Brent, give up golf and sports with the boys. Began regular walking and hiking with Serena. Loss of concentrated time with boys more than gained by bonding with Serena - blessing!

Young men have often ask me the secret to marriage and finding the right one. Answer is always the same, being the right one. Surrender to God and be willing to sacrifice for wife.

29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— **30** for we are members of his body. **31** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united (Hebrew *dabaq daw-bak'*) (to be joined) to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” **32** **Vj ku'ku'c'r tqhqwpf "o { uvgt{ " dw'Kco "vcmpi "** **cdqw'Ej tkv'cpf "vj g"ej wtej OPH**

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Marriage – Picture of Christ and His bride the Church

This is mind-blowing; husband/wife relationship a “picture” of the union between Christ and the Church! We (the CHURCH) are the bride of CHRIST!

This is the design? the model? the target? When we stray from this and do it our own way we simply cannot expect the same results. God has a reason for this design and part of it points to the Marriage between Jesus Christ and His Church;

ONENESS killers- Why talk about this? We have to talk about it because it is a crucial conversation.

Next to lack of commitment/incompatibility, infidelity is cited as the single most leading cause of divorce in USA; up to 40%, depending on the source and year. Forbes study in 2024 – 34%. Point is its too high and it erodes ONENESS.

Infidelity manifests in different ways; with our body as a sexual act, but but can also occur with mind (thoughts) and eyes. **Jesus said;** “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matthew 5:27-28 ²⁹If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. Matthew 5:27-30

If this is you? This includes porn, wild fantasies...Why am I looking at this person in this way; looking elsewhere, am I not being one with my spouse, Jesus is in the room;

You say - my body is my own – Really??

1 Corinthians 6:13 You say, food for the stomach and stomach for food, and God will destroy them both. The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body..

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God? **You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. NIV**

Paul is not scolding us! Reminding us of the new purpose of our bodies – to honor and glorify God.

Adultery/infidelity is an act that corrupts/defiles the marriage; it breaks a sacred covenant before God, distorts and perverts Oneness. It erodes the Oneness with your spouse. As a single person, sex outside of marriage also erodes that Oneness with the Father. As a follower of Jesus – your body is a temple.

Have we had this crucial conversation? Do we agree on what our relationship is supposed to be? (pause) Do we need to have to have a crucial conversation about the purity in our relationship. (pause) Requires a lot of GRACE and a little bit of salt.

The goal is to glorify God with our body as a living sacrifice, spirit and soul, everything we do, married or single.

Honor God with body Honor God with your finances.

What is the ____ cause of divorce n Amerca -- finances

***Third CRUCIAL CONVERSATION - How are we going to spend our money?**

Debra explains budgeting <https://youtu.be/XRegjCniud0>

The first month Brent and I were married he said, “let’s agree to let each other know we are going to spend more than \$100.00 on a purchase.”

- We were both raised in families that were “savers” not spenders – we are both savers.

Why talk about this in church?

Money is widely known as one of the leading causes of divorce in America.

- It's estimated that financial problems contribute to 20 to 30% of all divorces. Forbes study 2024 – 24% That makes it #3.

- around 41% of divorced Gen-xers, along with 29% of divorced boomers stated that the reason their marriages ended was due to financial disagreements. (Jimenez Law Firm study 2024)
- Talk about money management decisions
- My \$, instead of a mutual decision - Raymond
- When we got married Don't spend more than \$100.00 w/o telling
- Take turns paying the bills
- I need my own account -- mom giving me advice

Story: young couple married 2 years, he wants a personal computer and she wants to go to Europe for vacation. Can't do both. Saving pennies.

- Husband goes on walk to talk to God, my wife should submit to my wishes, home computer is what we need, use it as an extra work station . . . as the husband explains the dilemma to God, he clearly hears: love your wife as Christ loved the church. What? asks again . . . same answer. The couple went on vacation to Europe. After they returned home, they saved enough money in record timing to also buy his home computer. Now he's grateful for the trip – all the memories they made together on that trip – priceless.
- Grace/love does not insist on its own way.

Leads to a discussion on spending priorities, who is the saver and who is the spender

*Steps to growing Oneness with Grace

- Start conversating! Start with prayer
 - Then dive in some crucial ones ----with grace and salt
- Dive into a Crucial Conversation;
- With Grace and Salt;
- And follow the Rules of Engagement
- Am I willing to change? Pray for change in YOU.
 - Subject, submitted (to Christ first and then that makes it possible to be subject to one another Eph 5 spouse second)


- God offers Grace and forgiveness to all who seek Him and turn from their own ways.

Next steps: We offer mentoring and can offer referrals for counseling. We provide discounts through...In fact, we will pay for your first couples counseling session.

Marriage reflects our oneness with God.

End with thought and prayer

What Crucial Conversation do we need to have with God, with our spouse, with others...with Grace and salt



Marriage is imperfect. We start with a desire for oneness, and then we discover our differences.

Esther Perel

quote fancy